1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER VI

MATING AND MARRIAGE

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THERE are two ways in which a Haitian family may be formed. The first of these is through a marriage having the sanction of the Church, in token of which a ring is thereafter worn by the wife. The second mode of establishing a family is by means of the institution known as *plaçage*, wherein a man and a woman who desire to live together fulfill certain obligations and perform certain ceremonies at the home of the girl's parents, after which the new household is established.[1] The distinction between the two forms has been mentioned, though not analyzed, by several of those who traveled in the island after the period of slavery. Thus, according to Mackenzie:

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> "Marriage formally solemnised is not so common as unions of another kind. . . . In the North the practice of solemnising marriages is said to be more common than in the South, owing to the preceding practice under Christophe, and the exertions of the priesthood at the Cape."[2]

Similarly, St. John speaks of not noticing "any particular ceremonies" at marriages:

> ". . . some are striving to imitate the upper classes, and have the ceremony performed in church, but the mass of the people are still not regularly married."[3]

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so that both forms must be considered by one interested in social institutions as constituting true marriage. The prestige which is derived from a Church union, however, is of appreciable significance; sufficient, indeed, to motivate weddings at which the children and even grandchildren of the principals act as attendants. A man and woman may live together as *placées* ten or fifteen years or more before they have amassed the necessary amount to pay for a legal marriage. It is only when parents of young people are prosperous enough to pay for a Church marriage that their union receives the stamp of approval of the Church, for the Church wedding involves considerable expenditure in terms of Haitian peasant economy. A "first class" wedding, for example, calls for the payment of 47.50 gourdes; a "second class" ceremony, 40 gourdes; and the least expensive, or "third class" rite costs 34 to 36 gourdes, while in addition to this, five gourdes must be paid the assistant who rings the church bells, and a fixed fee of 25 gourdes is assessed for the civil registration of the marriage. The wedding ring is, of course, indispensable; a modest one, of gold, costs 60 gourdes. Food and drinks served at the festivities following the Church service cost, conservatively, another fifty gourdes, while if an ox is slaughtered to provide a more elaborate feast, the amount is correspondingly greater. Finally, the person who reads the necessary prayers before the festivities begin and the musicians who play for the *bal* must also be compensated. It can readily be seen, therefore, how a man and woman may live together in a *placée* union for years before their resources permit a legal marriage.

Whatever the type of mating, the first steps toward betrothal are taken by the young man. Though he has courted the girl of his choice and his proposal is acceptable to her, customary procedure demands that she refer him to her parents, whereupon his parents appear before those of the girl to make their plea on his behalf. If both families reside

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love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law.

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl.

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys.

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [917] [796] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church [583] wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be de- [777] scribed in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in [183] front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

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sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all around in which his younger wives lived, as they could not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest."[10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'"[12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mirebalais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The division of the land is said almost invariably to entail lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, " Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if the matter goes to court, only the husband of a " married " wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be nullified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time of her " legal " marriage, though dowries are rarely given among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her " marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

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[illegible] daughters who have been given 428
a dowry forfeit their share, but even when a formal *dot* has 683
not passed, the number of animals given her when she went 626
to her husband is mentioned and she is sometimes asked to waive a corresponding portion of her share in consideration of what she has already received. If she refuses to do this, however, there is no recourse but to allow her her full share, though public opinion would censure such greed.

Debts incurred by the dead must be repaid before the estate 428
can be settled, while attempts are also made to collect all loans 426
made by him. Where no written statement of a debt exists, a declaration by the dying man before witnesses is necessary; otherwise his heirs acknowledge their obligation at their pleasure. Conversely, if no statement attested by a notary exists to verify a loan made by him, his heirs have no means of collecting it. On the whole, lending has been found through experience to be ill-advised unless such a "paper" has been executed before a notary, and land has been pledged as collateral either before the head of the family of the borrower or before a magistrate. For though interest is not demanded by the peasants, and loans are made as a gesture of friendship, "even the people of the hills" — to use the Mirebalais idiom for the most naïve rustics — have learned that just debts are often not repaid where there is no legally enforceable claim.

A man who dies childless leaves his property to his brothers 428
and sisters by the same father and mother. The husband of a "legally" married woman who dies childless is said to have the right to one fourth of her property, the rest going to her relatives, but most often "they drive him away," giving him nothing, and since a man is customarily too proud to contest the matter, he does not insist on receiving his due. A childless [768]
widow continues to live in her dead husband's house until her death, and she also receives one fourth of her husband's property. At her death the house passes to her husband's relatives, but the quarter of his estate which she had received goes to her family.

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass.

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered.

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them

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soon after the death of one for whom he had deep affection, the matter is entirely one which concerns his own feelings. If a woman who cannot afford proper mourning clothes remarries in the Church before she has discharged the obligation to wear mourning for her dead husband, gossip will be heard, but, on the other hand, a woman who has been legally married, and who therefore may not remarry for a year after her husband's death, may be taken as *placée* by another before that period has elapsed. In this case, however, she must wear full mourning and otherwise observe all the necessary rites before the other man with safety may seek the approval of the Church for the union.

76 Though children who have lived until about twelve years of age and have been baptized are given a *dernière prière* and must not be forgotten when sacrifices are made to the family dead, there is but little mourning for them. "*'Ti moun pas gagné deuilles* — Children do not merit the wearing of mourning," it is said, and they are called "*'ti z'anges* — little angels" — for they are too young to have sinned. "It is only when one makes love that the important sins begin." Therefore, if a young person dies, not only do his parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters not follow his coffin to the grave, but they do not mourn for him. Only those younger brothers and sisters who were of his age — twelve or thirteen years old — wear semi-mourning.

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

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[For information on the polygynous aspects of placage, as a socially acceptable form of marriage in the society, see also category 595.]

In the early
years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2,3] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[2,3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41-74)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *prêt' savane*.
[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.
[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti*.
[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.
[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.
[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."
[7]The rite of *rafraîchi tête* is conducted periodically for a *maît' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.
[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.
[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.
[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 75-94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

I have no mother there,
I have no father there,
I have no sister there,
I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (pp. 95-104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.
[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.
[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.
[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (pp. 105-109)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.
[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 110-121)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362.
[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October–December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266–276.

[9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126–156*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 121 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121 114 585 [178] The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then [191] [197] [58] [59] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves [829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 565 191 771 583 595 144 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders.

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves.

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty.

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 581 588 643 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 581 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 565 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[114] 581 554 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."